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Programme planning

Proposed strategic framework for the period 2006-2007

Part two: biennial programme plan

Programme 21
Palestine refugees

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* A/59/50 and Corr.1.

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Overall orientation

21.1 The General Assembly, by its resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949, established the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) as a separate entity within the United Nations system and mandated it to provide continued assistance for the relief of Palestine refugees. Since starting its work in 1950, UNRWA has become the largest operational agency in the Middle East, demonstrating its capacity to adapt and enhance its programmes as required to meet the evolving needs of refugees and to cope with developments in the region. It stands ready to continue doing so during the biennium 2006-2007 in accordance with the triennial mandate it receives from the General Assembly, the most recent of which was resolution 56/52 of 10 December 2001, by which the Assembly extended UNRWA's mandate until June 2005.

21.2 UNRWA reports directly to the General Assembly. Overall review of UNRWA programmes and activities is undertaken by the 10-member Advisory Commission, which includes representatives of the Agency's major donors and host Governments.

21.3 The strategic objectives of UNRWA for the biennium 2006-2007 are to sustain its investment in the human resources of Palestine refugees, to support the social and economic development of their communities and to provide targeted relief and support for refugees experiencing special hardship. The Agency also provides emergency assistance to vulnerable refugee communities in situations of acute distress. Beginning in 2000, over and above its regular services to refugees, the Agency provided emergency assistance to over 1.2 million refugees affected by the strife in the occupied Palestinian territory. It plans to continue these services as necessary. Should the strife in the occupied Palestinian territory continue or intensify, the deteriorating economic conditions of the refugees, the restrictions on the flow of goods, services and staff members and the heavy demands of emergency operations on staff will affect service provision to the refugees. Should the peace talks resume and lead to a settlement, the Agency may be asked to assume new tasks.

21.4 During 2006-2007, UNRWA will also provide, on an exceptional basis, services to the non-refugee poor living within refugee communities, in keeping with past practice. Under the responsibility of its Commissioner-General, UNRWA aims to achieve its objectives by maintaining provision of a targeted blend of education, health, relief, social, and microfinance services to eligible Palestine refugees. Eligible registered Palestine refugees, who are located in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, are projected to number some 4.4 million in 2006. Gender issues remain a major concern of the Agency in all its programme areas. In 2006-2007 UNRWA will build on key achievements in this area by further developing its gender-mainstreaming practices. A key activity in this regard is the development and implementation, during the biennium 2004-2005, of an Agency-wide gender strategy, through which the Agency expects to realize identifiable accomplishments in 2006-2007.

21.5 The Palestine refugees rely on the Agency to provide a range of basic services for their well-being. The Agency, which is entirely dependent on voluntary funding to implement its programmes, and which has contended with chronic funding shortfalls in recent years, will continue to maintain efficient and cost-conscious management and to carry out strategic planning and programme assessments, as

necessary, in order to preserve the quality and scope of its services for a rapidly growing refugee population. To engage the international community on, inter alia, ensuring funding and UNRWA programme needs, the Agency is planning a major international conference to be hosted by the Government of Switzerland in June 2004. Furthermore, in early 2004, the Agency prepared a five-year strategic plan (2004-2008) to identify the activities and resources necessary to upgrade services and rehabilitate infrastructure. In each subprogramme area, including general education, technical and vocational educational training, maternal and child health care, disease prevention, poverty alleviation and microfinance, the Agency has sought to achieve programme results consistent with the targets and commitments established by the United Nations system, such as the Millennium Development Goals and the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as concepts and strategies developed by the World Health Organization (WHO). UNRWA will continue to maintain its efforts to achieve this consistency throughout 2006-2007.

Subprogramme 1
Education

Objective of the Organization: To meet the basic educational and training needs of Palestine refugee children and youth and to enhance their educational and employment opportunities.

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Maintenance of the quality of education provided to the Palestine refugee population at all levels	(a) (i) Pass rate for pupils in the basic education cycle (ii) Number of additional educational facilities or other infrastructure facilities constructed or renovated (iii) Number of education staff from various categories (teaching and non-teaching) trained
(b) Adapted and improved course content and curricula in both the general and technical education programmes to match developments in host countries	(b) Percentage of curricula adapted or improved relative to the total number of modifications required
(c) Adapted and improved course content and curricula in vocational training institutions to meet changing market conditions	(c) Percentage of curricula adapted or improved relative to the total number of modifications required

Strategy

21.6 The strategy in attaining the objective includes:

(a) Supporting schools to ensure that each eligible Palestinian child has a place in school, where he/she receives quality education, and improving the services provided in vocational and technical training centres for better job opportunities;

(b) Maintaining an environment conducive to learning and meeting the needs arising from the natural growth in the refugee population through upgrading and construction of facilities and enhancing the skills and competencies of the Agency's teaching and training staff;

(c) Fostering work relationships with ministries of education in order to have ample time to respond to changes;

(d) Ensuring that equipment, tools and teaching aids are updated;

(e) Ensuring the maintenance of full gender parity in UNRWA schools.

Subprogramme 2
Health

Objective of the Organization: To meet the basic health needs of Palestine refugees and to improve the overall state of health of their community.

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Reduced infant and maternal mortality from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, with special emphasis on reduction of neonatal mortality	(a) Percentage of infants delivered by trained personnel
(b) Reduced morbidity, disability and mortality from communicable and non-communicable diseases	(b) (i) Maintenance of above 95 per cent immunization coverage rate against vaccine-preventable diseases (ii) Percentage of newly detected cases managed for non-communicable diseases
(c) Enhanced environmental sustainability in refugee camps	(c) Percentage of camp refugee shelters connected to underground sewerage systems
(d) Streamlined health policies and service standards with those of the host authorities	(d) Number of partnership agreements and joint programmes with the host authorities

Strategy

21.7 The strategy in attaining the objective includes:

(a) Focusing on integration of the various elements of care within a primary health care approach, with special emphasis on reduction of risk factors and management of high-risk groups;

(b) Re-design of the special programme for control of non-communicable diseases and prevention and control of iron-deficiency anaemia in order to improve the impact of these programmes on the health status of the target group;

(c) Continued investment in training and development of health staff;

(d) Strengthened partnerships with stakeholders to help mobilize additional resources, increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness and avoid overlap.

Subprogramme 3
Relief and social services

Objective of the Organization: To support those Palestine refugees who suffer the greatest socio-economic disadvantage and to facilitate their self-reliance.

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Improved living conditions and more timely cash and food distributions to eligible refugees	(a) (i) Percentage of shelters rehabilitated in relation to identified housing needs (ii) Percentage of cash and food distributions made on time
(b) Enhanced well-being of disadvantaged Palestine refugees	(b) (i) Number of jobs created or sustained through the micro-credit community support programme (group guaranteed loans, soft loans and apprenticeship training, etc.) (ii) Number of disabled clients who received direct rehabilitation from community rehabilitation centres

Strategy

21.8 The strategy in attaining the objective includes:

(a) Providing food support and other shelter rehabilitation to Palestine refugees to meet their basic needs in order to maintain a reasonable standard of living as well as increase their access to community-based socio-economic opportunities and rehabilitation services to facilitate their self-reliance;

(b) Continued capacity-building efforts, inter alia, through the participation of key staff in training-of-trainers courses that centre on gender issues;

(c) Maintaining up-to-date register of refugees to track eligibility patterns.

Subprogramme 4
Microfinance and microenterprise

Objective of the Organization: To improve the quality of life of small and microentrepreneurs, create and sustain jobs, decrease unemployment and provide income-generating opportunities for needy men and women through the provision of credit.

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Increased business and income generating opportunities	(a) (i) Value of loans disbursed (ii) Number of loans disbursed
(b) Improved development of the capacity of women microentrepreneurs	(b) (i) Number of loans provided to women-owned enterprises (ii) Amount of outstanding balance on women's loans

Strategy

21.9 The strategy for attaining the objective includes the development of a range of self-sustaining credit products that are sufficiently comprehensive to meet the normal range financial needs of microenterprise owners. The outreach of these products to the business community will be provided through an expanding network of branch offices in each region to ensure that all areas with significant Palestine refugee populations have access to the programme's loan products. Each branch office will be developed on the basis of institutional cost recovery; new branch offices will be established only in cases where the market is able to support self-sufficient credit operations.

Legislative mandates

General Assembly resolutions:

302 (IV)	Assistance to Palestine refugees
56/52	Assistance to Palestine refugees
58/95	Assistance to Palestine refugees and support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East